



AMBEDKAR VIEWS ON BUDDHISM APPLICABILITY TO THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Dr. Ambedkar was a rare combination of a political leader, legal luminary, constitutional pundit, ardent scholar and champion of the downtrodden masses; whose memory never fails in the minds of the suffering masses for many years to come. Dr. Ambedkar was a fascinating personality. He "was a brilliant academician, a popular attorney, an erudite scholar, a powerful writer and a great Constitutionalist". Being a person from low caste, he suffered humiliation many times in the hands of upper caste Hindus. He raised his voice against Untouchability and discrimination against low caste people for this he used media as powerful weapon.

Ambedkar certainly possessed a multi-dimensional and multifaceted personality. He was a great soul with a spirit of sacrifice and scientific outlook, who led and whose followers continue to lead movements of self-respect throughout India. It took two decades for him to embrace Buddhism, a momentous decision indeed. But his choice of Buddhism in 1956 unfolded a new life before millions of exploited untouchables.

When Ambedkar declared in 1935 that he was going to renounce Hinduism, some Hindus including Mahatma Gandhi felt that religion was not a thing which could be ordered at the whims and fancies of the person concerned. Mahatma Gandhi said: It is unfortunate that Ambedkar has declared his resolve to abandon the Hindu religion. But conversion is not going to serve his purpose. Religion is not like a house or coat which can be changed whenever one feels like it. Ambedkar, on the other hand, felt that man is not born for religion. But conversion is not going to serve his purpose. Religion is not like a house or coat which can be changed whenever one feels like it. Ambedkar, on the other hand, felt that man is not born for religion. Religion is created by man and, therefore, it should work for the welfare of man. A religion which does not respect equality, liberty and fraternity among all its adherents is not a religion but a felony. It sounds strange but yet it is true that Hinduism shows love respect and sympathy for the animals, birds, stones, woods, etc. but it does not consider man as man and even the co-religionists are not shown any sympathy and love.

While speaking at the Mahar conference in 1936 on the question of conversion to some other religion, Dr. Ambedkar said: I have decided once and for all to give up this religion. My religious conversion is not inspired by any material motive. There is hardly anything that I cannot achieve while remaining an untouchable. There is no other feeling than that of spiritual feeling underlying my religious conversion. Hinduism does not appeal to my conscience. My self-respect cannot assimilate Hinduism. In your case, change of religion is imperative for worldly as well as spiritual ends. Do not care for the opinion of those who foolishly ridicule the idea of your conversion for material ends. Of what avail is the religion that deals with life after death. A rich man's sense may be tickled by this idea in his leisure time. Those who are well placed and prosperous in this world may pass life in contemplation of life after death. But why should he live under the fold of that religion which has deprived you of honor, money, food and shelter? The result was confusion for those people who feared that change of religion by the untouchables was going to divide the Hindu society; Ambedkar believed that since there was no social relationship between them in matters such as dining and marriage, there was no need to be disturbed about it. He thus said in the same conference: therefore, nobody can say that by change of religion of the untouchables, Hindu society would be divided into two pieces. You will be just as different to them after conversion as you are to the Hindus today. Nothing new is going to happen.

He gone through number of epics of Hindus Society and made his own comments and out rightly rejected the theory "karma". He felt than Hindu upper caste people cleverly used this weapon against the low caste people to realize their own ends. He was also against worshipping the Gods by Sheryl neglecting the welfare of mankind especially the downtrodden. To set right this he has chosen Buddhism has best alternative. Ambedkar gave considerable time to study various religions, especially Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. He found that Hinduism offered no succor to the untouchables. According to him, both Lord Christ and Prophet Mohammed arrogated to themselves divinity by their emphatic declaration that they represented Gods. Lord Christ regarded himself without his being recognized as the Son of God. Similarly Prophet

Mohammed claimed that he was the messenger of God and also the last messenger of God on earth. On the other hand, Lord Buddha believed in self-abnegation. He regarded himself as the son of the soil and preached his gospel as a common man. Buddha considered son of the soil and preached his gospel as a common man. Buddha considered himself merely a "Margadata", Whereas Christ and Mohammed considered themselves "Mokshadata". Whatever Islam and Christianity taught were the words of God and therefore God's words, taught by both Christ and Mohammed, were infallible and beyond question. On the contrary, Buddha told Ananda, his disciple, in Mahaparinibbana Sutta that his religion was based on reasons and experience and he advised his followers not to accept his teaching blindly without reference to reason and experience. Buddhism was an option for Ambedkar, because its revival in India had long since begun. The roots of this revival trace back to archaeological discoveries of British civil servants, to the recovery and translation of texts by nineteenth century European scholars and Anagarika Dharmapala's foundation of the Maha Bodhi society, Dedicated to the rehabilitation of ancient shrines and the renaissance of the faith on its native soil. By the early decades of this century the beginnings of a revived India Buddhism were evident-in limited but influential conversions at both extremes of India society. These included Tamil – speaking *pariahs* in the South and the emergence out of caste-Hindu society in the North of a trio of Buddhist scholars, Mahapadita Rahula Sankrityayan, Ven. Anand Kausalyayan and Ven. Jagdish Kashyap. The writings of the Tamil Buddhist, especially of P.L. Narasu, made a strong impact upon Ambedkar, while the leading and enduring role played by the latter three is continued today by Ven. Anand Kausalyayan in his training centre for Bhikkhus in Nagpur. The convert's background, as Untouchables in a caste society, colors their views of the faith they espouse-casting into bold relief the social teachings of the Dhamma and those interpretations of the Buddhist past that speak to their need for self-respect. These perspectives were afforded them by "Babasahed" Ambedkar, whose authority is unquestioned by most converts. A few even refer to him as a "Second Buddha" and the nagpur *diksha* has been described as a new Turning of the Wheel of the Law. This new Turning gives the Law a distinctive flavor. As a scholar of political theory and champion of the downtrodden, Ambedkar projects upon the Dhamma his own faith in rationalism and his over-riding concern for social reform. The chief vehicle for transmitting and interpreting the new faith is his book *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, written in English at the end of his life, published posthumously and subsequently translated into Hindi and Marathi. His aim was to produce a "Bible", and so it has served and continues to serve in modern Buddhist India, where it is held in reverence and gratitude. For many of the literates it is the sole Buddhist text they own or have read. For the illiterates it is the one they hear, read aloud to them in villages and city slums, bearing in their eyes the authority of sacred scripture.

In his Hindi translation of the volume, Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan has identified the original texts from which Ambedkar drew. Queried about departures from canonical *The Buddha and His Dhamma* represents a "new orientation, but not a distortion" and that all central doctrines are present. Ambedkar himself offers a rationale by which differences can be explained. He points out that oral transmission of the teachings gave scope for error even during the Buddha's lifetime. Identifying five such cases in the Suttas, he notes that mistaken views appear "Common with regard to karma and rebirth", and are likely to have confused, especially, since they represent Brahmanical reinterpretations. "One has, therefore, to be very careful", Ambedkar concludes, "in accepting what is said in Buddhist canonical literature as being the word of the Buddha". Ambedkar sets forth the criteria by which he determines authentic city: there is one test which is available. If there is anything which could be said with confidence, it is: He was nothing if not rational, if not logical. Anything, therefore, which is rational and logical, other things being equal, may be taken to be the word of the Buddha. The second thing is that the Buddha never cared to enter into a discussion which was not profitable for man's welfare. Therefore, anything attributed to the Buddha which did not relate to man's welfare cannot be accepted to be the word of the Buddha (IV.V.12-4)

Ambedkar's chief departure from the traditional view of the historical origins of the Dhamma lies in his account of the circumstances prompting the Going Forth of Gautama and the ethnic character of the mass, of his followers. Both these

points of divergence lay emphasis on the nature of the Dhamma as rationalistic social gospel and both dramatize the role of non-Aryan elements in its birth and dissemination. The cause for Gautama's renunciation of his princely life is no longer taken to be the traditional Four Passing Sights, which confronted the young Sakya with the fact of human sufferings. Ambedkar found it an affront to commonsense to suppose that a man of 29 would not have been exposed earlier. It is impossible to the presence of sickness and death. These are common events occurring by the hundreds and the Buddha could not have failed to come across them earlier. It is impossible to accept the traditional explanation that this was the first time he saw them. The explanation is not plausible and does not appeal to reasons.

In Buddhism Ambedkar found 3-distinct qualities Prajna, Karuna, Samata. Prajna means one's own decisiveness before many alternatives to make a right choice. Karuna is nothing but love on mankind. Samata in other words equality among citizens of the society. Ambedkar felt that the existing Hindu Dharma is favour few sections of the society and making others scapegoats by put for thing Karma theory for their present condition. With lot of concern towards the untouchables he organized mass conversions into Buddhism. He openly expressed his anguish against the atrocities on 'Dalits' even in free India. As a true Buddhist he tried to incorporate some of his views while writing the constitution of India. Directive principles of state policy of our constitution clearly directs the state to follow the path of equality, fraternity. In the views of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Buddhism propagates selflessness, simplicity, humanity, sacrificing nature concern towards the needy equality of opportunities to all irrespective of their caste, color and creed. He thought that in modern society where exploitation against the dalits is in crooked and naked way, Buddhism could be an eye-opener to the Hindu fundamentalism. Birth and death are similar for every one and blood the flows in everyone are of same color, then one should be discriminated and exploited? Ambedkar opened the preaches of Buddha can educate the Dalits to understand the happenings around them and the real drama of Hindu fundamentalists in the name of religion. The Dalits can get proper direction from Buddhism to set right their own thinking and come up as united force to tackle the situation. He found the lack of education, accessibility to the minimum needs and productive assets is the root cause for lower status of Dalits. Thus he preached and argued for equal right to downtrodden. He advocated unity among Dalits to fight against evils of the society through he maintained rapport with the national leaders he maintained his own identity. As a true representative of Dalits and never taken a back step to put forth his ideas in true spirit to protect the interests of low cast people Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a true Buddhist not only preached but followed the principles through out his life. He appealed to the Dalits that by adopting Buddhism. They can raise that their suffering or not due to their 'karma' but because of wrong doings of Hindu fundamentalists in the name of God and they can fight these forces with their education and unity. With his unrelated faith in Buddhism, concern towards Dalits in preaches and practice became champion of the downtrodden forever in the history of modern India.

Dr. Ambedkar recognized Buddhism is the best religion for peace and happiness of both man and society. Thirdly Buddhism is a universal religion which does not allow itself to be passed into oblivion, as it is based on reason and experience as opposed to the sterile and static doctrines of other religion Dr. Ambedkar stated that Buddhism it was also an integral part of our social system. Buddhism laid emphasis on non-violence and morality. According to him, the Buddhist religion was nothing if not moral. It was true that in Buddhism there was no God but Ambedkar held that Buddhism had substituted morality for God. He had prepared his followers psychologically for a conversion from 1935 on, beginning with his own statement that he "would not die a Hindu". But the conversion was held suddenly, dramatically and without much organizational preparation on October 14, 1956 and within two months Ambedkar was dead. He had died a Buddhist, and he had set in motion a movement that soon involved over three million people. But although the inspiration of Ambedkar's own example and his invitation to others to follow him were powerful directives, the organization of the new religion was at a bare minimum.

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